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Letter dated 20 February 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Eritrea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

With the conclusion of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission on the final demarcation decision and termination of its operations at the end of November 2007, regrettably there has been a rush from the United Nations to bank on peripheral issues instead of addressing seriously and appropriately the core of the problem as the basis for regional peace and security. Eritrea has maintained all along that the issue of fuel is technical, which could have been resolved quietly without politicizing it.

The press offices of the United Nations and other private media have been levelling unfounded accusations against Eritrea about the situation of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) in the country. Eritrea has not requested United Nations peacekeepers to regroup in Asmara nor has it seized arms or equipment belonging to UNMEE as reported in the media. The decision to regroup UNMEE troops was done unilaterally by the United Nations. More importantly, it was not until yesterday, 19 February, that the communication was received after the regrouping of the troops had already been put into effect.

All plans and requests of the United Nations should be formally and clearly communicated in a timely fashion and must be consistent with the Algiers Agreement. Eritrea, as a host country, requests that it receive adequate information from the Secretary-General as to what he intends to do with the regrouped United Nations troops in Asmara. Full and detailed information on the future plans of the Mission is necessary before the Government of Eritrea presents its considered response on the matter.

Moreover, the Government of Eritrea reiterates its request to receive a response from the Secretary-General regarding Ethiopia's occupation of Eritrean territories in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the substantive provisions of the Algiers Peace Agreement, which has been highlighted in several letters and communications of President Isaias Afwerki and the Government of Eritrea since the end of November 2007.

Eritrea cannot be blamed for a lack of cooperation if its views and concerns are disregarded as a host country and if it receives a communication on the eve of an event without drawing an orderly withdrawal plan from the buffer zone that was established under the Algiers Agreement. Eritrea wishes to underline that coordination and cooperation is necessary on vital issues to ensure the orderly and dignified handling of the situation.

08-24740 (E) 210208

I would be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Araya **Desta**
Ambassador, Permanent Representative